NEBULOUS 1

CONTENTS PAGE

NEBULOUS

Cover Art by Sal Buscema and Dan Adkins.....1
Contents Page.....2
Commentary by Jim Stewart.....3
An Interview with Sal Buscema.....4
Who's Afraid of the Big Red Cheese by B. Cantey...8
Centerspread of CONAN by Steve Hickman.....12
The Andromedia Saga by M.Roberts and J. Stewart..18
The Torch in his Own Mag? by B. Cantey.....21
Back Cover by John G. Pantucchio.....24

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COMMENTARY

JIM STEWART

Well,I never thought we'd make it, but here it is-Nebulous 1! A lot of hard work went into this issue,and I hope you all enjoy it. Any comments or criticisms are welcome. My special thanks go to the great Sal Buscema,who took time out of his busy schedule to complete the interview. Acknowledgements also go to Don Newton and Bill Cantey for their great contributions,we hope to see more of them next time 'round.

THE ANDROMEDIA SAGA is a strip originated by myself out of a desire to create a strip reminiscent of the late Star Trek,many thanks to Don Newton and Mike Roberts for their excellent designs.

A very special thanks is in line for Gary G. Groth,for his help in the production and lay-out of Nebulous #1.

Fan Artists and Writers; I would be glad to review for publication,any art or manuscripts you may wish to send in,however art and text must be accompanied by return postage,and manuscripts must be preceded by advance notice. The point is that Nebulous is in need of material.

Nebulous will be a fanzine devoted to comic art,and fantasy in general from Science Fiction to Sword and Sorcery. Any and all suggestions for new features or columns are welcome. Each issue,we plan to feature some pro work along with our regular staffers' work. We also plan interviews with personalities in fandom and prodom,along with great art and articles.

Next issue we plan to feature an interview with the one and only DON NEWTON,with art by Mr. Newton along with material by Mike Roberts Steve Hickman Carter Scholz John Clark and Skip Olsen. We hope to feature text by Bill Cantey,and possibly Tony Isabella,and probably a letters column,featuring your gripes or praises.

As this is my first attempt at a fanzine there are probably numerous rough spots this issue, but please bear with me,there's bound to be some improvement next issue. But,to stay in print,we need <u>your</u> support,how about it?

This issue's CONAN centerspread by Steve Hickman will soon be available as a poster from Fantastic Fanzine Enterprises,which is by the way changing it's name to Fanta Graphics. Look toward this new organization for many new and exciting products and projects with fandom in mind. Also Gary tells me that Adzine will be dropped.

I have a lot of plans for Nebulous in the future. Next issue,I'm shooting for a thirty two to thirty six page count,with better material and lay-out than this ish. You'll be seeing a marked improvement in the second issue,we're hoping for good response to the ads. There are infinite possibilities for Nebulous,we may even get up to process color covers,who knows? But,without your help,this can't come about. I need your help,if you have any art or articles to contribute,please send them, because, without more material,better material,Nebulous can't move up in page count.

Well,that's about it for this issue,so thumb through this issue,and don't hesitate to send in your gripes or compliments if any. Send all correspondence or LOC's to:

NEBULOUS
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Jim Stewart

AN INTERVIEW WITH SAL BUSCEMA!

I was fortunate enough to meet Mr. Buscema in May of 1970 through a mutual friend, Gary Groth. It was a great thrill and one that I won't soon forget. It was then that I asked him for this interview,happily he consented. The next time that I saw Mr. Buscema was at the 1970 Metro Comicon held by Gary Groth. When I inquired about the interview,he said to wait a week or two. A few weeks later, I phoned him and asked about the interview, he said it'd be a while because of all the work that he was bogged down with. But he also suggested that I send him a spool of tape along with a questionaire. I did and the following transcript is the result.

JIM: Well,to start off the interview,could you give us a brief summary of your career as an inker-artist?

SAL: Well,I started with Marvel a couple of years ago as an inker and in a few months I graduated to penciling. As you probably know, I started with the Avengers and from there went to Sub-Mariner,did one mystery strip and oh,a lot of things inbetween,covers and such. And right now I'm working on the Avengers penciling it,I'm inking Conan,there is a possibility that I might be inking Spider-Man but I'm not sure about that yet,and I'm also penciling and inking about 3 or 4 covers a month so as you can see,Marvel keeps me pretty busy, anyway that's the summary of my very brief career as a comic book inker-artist.

JIM: What did you do to earn a living before you came to Marvel?

SAL: Well,I started out in what you would call the advertising field about 14 years ago and up until two years ago,before I went to work for Marvel,I was a commercial illustrator. Primarily advertising and graphics.

JIM: When and where were you born?

SAL: I was born January the 26th,1936;in the borough of Brooklyn,New York City.

JIM: Did you collect comics as a boy and which were your favorite titles?

SAL: Well,yes I did,I was a big comic-book fan as a kid,had tons of them and I guess the comics I enjoyed the most when I was quite a bit younger,I used to enjoy the Walt Disney comics,then as I got into my early teens I really enjoyed the EC series of horror books, I thought they were pretty good,very good as a matter of fact,a little gory,but very good none the less.

JIM: Why did you choose to go to Marvel instead of National?

SAL: Well,to be really honest about it, I think both companies are very good,put out some excellent books,good material,but if I had to pick one,I would say-and this certainly isn't because I work for them, I sincerely feel this way,I think Marvel puts out a generally better book,or series of books.I think they're just a little more exciting, have a little more to say,that type of thing and I'm

very happy that I chose to go with them because they're a good outfit to work for.

JIM: How did you become an artist for Marvel?

SAL: Well,as you know,my brother John was working there for some time before I started working for them,I'm happy to say that Stan is alsays on the look out for new talent, and the first thing I did was ink some of Johnny's work,and living in Virginia it was a little impractical for me to take them up to Marvel myself,so Johnny brought them up there for me,since he lives in New York,and well, I'm happy to say that they liked what I did and that's how I started inking for them. And eventually I worked up some pencil samples, I did about 4 pages of the Hulk,a story of my own,not really a story line just simply some kind of story flow to show them that I had an ability to do that type of thing and again, happily they liked that so,well,here I am I've been working for them ever since.

JIM: How many books a month could you pencil at the most?

SAL: Probably two,I'd have to move pretty good to pencil two books a month,but I think I could do it without too much of a sweat.

JIM: How do you feel about your past work in comparison to your recent work?

SAL: Well,generally speaking,I'm never satisfied with what I do. When I look at the earlier stuff that I did for Marvel,I get a little sick(laughter). Again,to be very honest about it,I think I have improved in the past 2 years,I would be very disappointed if I hadn't,and generally speaking I think my work now is quite a bit better than the work I was doing 2 years ago, or even a year ago as a matter of fact. We don't stop there,though I hope to continue improving.

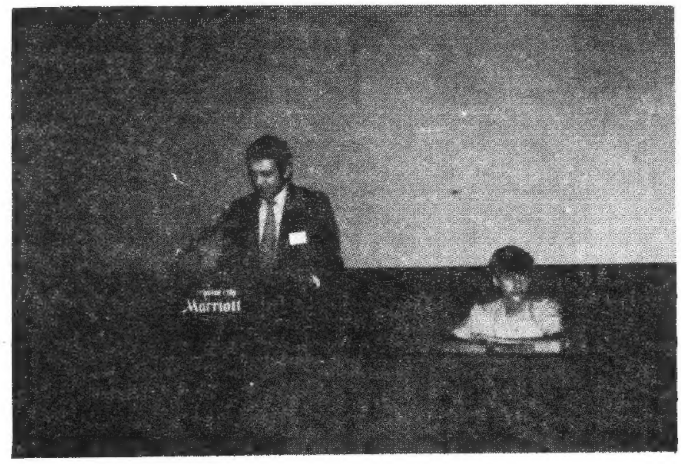
JIM: What titles are you doing for Marvel at this time?

SAL: Well,I think I answered that before, as I said,I'm penviling the Avengers now,and I'm inking Conan and doing about 3 or 4 covers a month which I pencil and ink.

JIM: Which titles would you pencil if you had the choice?

SAL: Well,I think the one that I'd probably enjoy doing the most,primarily I guess because it's something new,is the Sword and Sorcery,CONAN. I think it's a great book, stories are excellent,adapted as you know from the original author and that would really be a ball for me,then,oh,I'd like to do the Hulk,primarily because he's kind of a way out character,I think that's the type of thing I could do pretty well,and Thor I think that's a book most guys would like to do,very challenging,just an exciting character.

JIM: About inking,which books are you inking now?



SAL: Well,not to be repetative Jim,I answered that before,so just take it from there.

JIM: Whose work would you most like to ink?

SAL: My own--Period!

JIM: Would you prefer inking your own work rather than letting an inker handle it?

SAL: Well,I think the answer to the last question speaks for itself.For this question, yes,I would like to ink my own work, I think any penciler feels this way. I feel very strongly about this,I don't think any inker, regardless of how good he is can ink a guy's penciling as well as the penciler himself can because it's his drawing,it's a very personal thing and the inking is all a part of that.

JIM: Who in your opinion are the best inkers at Marvel?

SAL: Frank Giacoia and Joe Sinnott.

JIM: Which materials do you use in your inking?

SAL: Well,I use Pelikan india ink and a #4 Windsor-Newton sable hair brush.

JIM: How many pages a day could you ink?

SAL: Oh between three and five pages, depending on the penciler,some guys take a little longer to ink than others, but between three and five pages a day.

JIM: Back to penciling,how do you "draw",construction of figures,background,etc.

SAL: Briefly,I usually rough out a page and when I say rough,I mean just that very, very rough so much so that I'm probably the only one in the world who can understand what's going on,even then I have some trouble. Then I begin to tighten up the figures with short choppy lines,constructing the figure, putting in the correct proportions and so on,over the action that I've already roughed in. And then I do the finished drawing,in line,and I put my blacks in last.

JIM: How many pages a day could you do at the most?

SAL: I would say that I could do two pages a day,I have done as many as three,but I'd say that two is a good comefortable average for me.

JIM: Who are your favorite artists ?

SAL: Well,I have three that I think are, frankly,head and shoulders above all the rest in the field;naturally Jack Kirby,John Buscema and Joe Kubert. I think the three of them are tremendous.

JIM: As I've heard it,artists get paid by the page,could you tell us how much you are paid per page?

SAL: I'm sorry Jim,that's top secret.

JIM: Which of the titles at Marvel need the most improvement in your opinion?

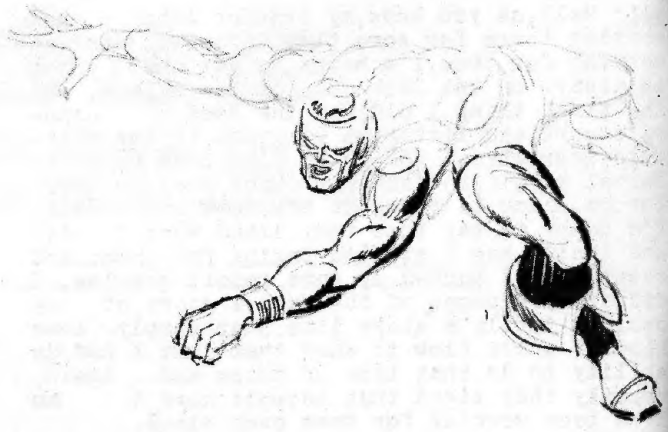
SAL: That's kind of a tough one to answer Jim to tell you the truth I'm too busy with my work,my books ,that I don't have time to scrutinize any of the other ones that closely,just as anything else needs improvement though, I think that I could probably say that all of the the books could be improved,some are stronger than others certainly, but they're always trying to improve all of the books at Marvel,so consequently I think all of them could be improved. Nothing ever reaches it's peak as far as I'm concerned,I think there's always room to grow,to change,that sort of thing.

JIM: Has either Stan or the Code ever "edited" any of your work?

SAL: I've had minor changes made on some of the stories I've done,nothing of any consiquence. These changes were made up at Marvel, there's only one instance where the Code Code forced a change in one of my stories,as a matter of fact,it was the first book I ever did. They changed one panel,the reason being it was a little bit too gory,or some sort of thing like that,I'm not really sure,but that was the only time the Code ever changed anything of mine.

JIM: What is your opinion of the Comics Code? Should it be left as is,toned down or just thrown out?

SAL: Well,the Code was written some time ago as you know,and the past 10 years has seenseen some drastic changes in our soceity,we're a lot more liberal about many things,consiquently,I think simply that the Code should be "updated". As it is written now,I think it's antiquated,a little bit archaic,I don't think it should be thrown out,I think it's good for the Comics Industry to "Police" itself--- for lack of a better term,just as it is good for any industry to police itself I just feel that when you fail to do that,other forces come in and compell you to make changes,that type of thing. No,I think the Comics Code, generally, I think it should stay but I definately think it should be updated.



The above pencil sketches taken from the back of the original of the cover,gives you a rare chance to study the solid drawing technique of Mr. Buscema.

JIM: What is your opinion of comics of the Golden Age compared to the comics today?

SAL: Well,that's relatively easy to answer, I think comics today are far,far superior. I think that comics of the Golden Age are very popular with the fans simply because they're old,nostalgic. I don't think you can compare them to what's being done today. The art is superior,the writing is superior,the printing is superior,they're superior all the way around,it would be like comparing the automobile of today to the car of 25 or 30 years ago,they're just far superior,so it is with comics. At least that's my opinion.

JIM: What is your opinion of comics changing over to the 25¢ format?

SAL: Well,I really don't know Jim,I guess I'm for anything that's going to help the industry since I'm a part of it,and if it will help the industry to raise the books to 25¢, then I'm all for it. Personally speaking, I think that 15¢ is a very small amount of money to pay for the entertainment that a comic book gives. I don't think a quarter is a lot by any means,I don't know whether all comics are going up to 25¢,I've heard some rumors to that effect,I'mnot really sure but if they do,it's fine with me,maybe then I can make some more money,who knows?

JIM: What in your opinion was the greatest strip ever published?

SAL: Wow! That's a beauty. Well,not having seen every strip that's been published I can't say. I think probably one I liked the best though,to try as best as I can to answer the question,one that I liked the best,simply because of the uniqueness of the character, the beautiful art,some excellent writing, I thought,was the first 4 or 5 issues of the SILVER SURFER. I thought it was really a top notch comic book. Different,much different from anything I've ever seen before, a really different kind of super-hero and as I said the first 4 or 5 issues I thought were really superb. Beautifully drawn,well inked,writing was terrific,good stories,just an all around good thing,I think I would have to pick that.

JIM: Do you think that the super-hero is on it's way down,or on the upswing?

SAL: Well,as far as I know now,it's neither, it's just holding it's own and I've always believed that regardless of what new types of books come along whether they be horror, romance,Sword and Sorcery whatever,I think the super-hero will always be here. They're kind of the main stay of comics,most of the books out today are super-hero books and although the sales of super-hero books have fluxuated from time to time they've generally always sold very well. New things'll come along, get hot for a while,but the super-hero will always be here,there's always new generations that come along to get interested in the super-hero comics in general and for that reason I think they will always be around.

JIM: Do you have any tips on drawing for aspiring artists?

SAL: Well,that's something I could talk about for a few hours,and since the tape isn't that long,I'm not going to do it. I'll answer it very simply,draw,draw and when you're finished drawing,draw some more,you can't get enough of it,it's something you have to do constantly 18hours a day if you possibly can and that's the only way to get good,to master drawing.

JIM: Do you have any hobbies?

SAL: Oh,I fool around with the guitar a little bit,and I like sports and an occaisional Vodka Martini,I guess those are my hobbies.

JIM: Whose art influenced you the most?

SAL: Obviously John Buscema.

JIM: As I've heard it,National destroys it's originals,what do you think of this?

SAL: I think it's a shame and I think they'll be sorry about it some day.

JIM: What does Marvel do with it's originals?

SAL: As far as I know,Stan has saved just about every page of art that's ever been done I think it's a good idea.

JIM: In the interview you had in Fantastic Fanzine #8*9,you expressed your dislike for the use of zip-a-tone in comics,I've noticed that in some of your brother's last AVENGERS books,they used a lot of zip-a-tone do you think this improved or ruined John's work?

SAL: Now,I'm 100% against zip-a-tone,I think zip-a-tone is very effective when you're reproducing in black and white,but as soon as you use color,the zip-a-tone loses it's effectiveness,simply because it "muddies" everything up. If you look at the spots where the zip-a-tone has been used,it just looks very muddy,bad in my opinion,I don't think it should be used. In black and white reproduction now,if they weren't using color in comics zip-a-tone is excellent,you see zip-a-tone used in some of the daily black and and white strips,used very effectively too, but not where there's color concerned,no I think it's a big mistake.

JIM: In conclusion,what type of story would you like to do the most? Sword and Sorcery Science Fiction Superhero,etc.

SAL: Well,of course I enjoy the super- hero books,since that's the thing I've been doing, I think if I had my choice,I'd love to take a crack at Sword and Sorcery,simply because it's something relatively new to comics, it's different,something you can really grab onto if you get my meaning,it looks like it would be just a lot of fun to do ,very exciting to do and that would be something that I really would like to try.

WHO'S AFRAID OF THE BIG RED CHEESE?

BY BILL CANTEY

Superman was;and apparently still is. The original CAPTAIN MARVEL,nicknamed the Big Red Cheese by one of his adversaries,still retains the distinction of being the most popular super-hero ever to appear in comic books. During the forties,his magazine,CAPTAIN MARVEL ADVENTURES,sold over two million copies a month;the demand being so strong that the publication maintained a bi-monthly schedule longer than many magazines exist. Superman managed to sell only a little over a million and a half a month during his best years,with Batman the second runner-up and the only comic-book character to go over the million mark after the crash of the fifties. And therein lies the answer to the question,"Why did Superman's publishers charge CAPTAIN MARVEL's company with plagiarism when there were so many other,flying,bullet-proof super-types around at the same time?" CAPTAIN MARVEL was the only competitor to have the bad manners to beat Superman out in sales. But,to give credit where credit is due;Superman was first.His company(later to be National Periodicals) introduced the super-hero concept,complete with colorful,skin-tight costume and secret identity in 1938. Fawcett Publishing Company took note of the success and decided to grab a piece of the action. CAPTAIN MARVEL made the scene in 1940 attired in a predominantly red uniform as opposed to Superman's basic blue with red and gold trim. Originally, MARVEL's outfit was more like a uniform than a costume. The top half buttoned,tunic-like at the right shoulder. Gold braid decorated the lower sleeves,matching the lightning bolt on his chest as well as the gold trim on his white cape.The cape was worn casually as a soldier of the czar might've worn his secondary jacket,draped over one shoulder and fastened by a golden cord. A gold colored cumberbamb took the place of the more popular overbriefs, and golden jack-boots completed the outfit. Sartorially,CAPTAIN MARVEL was outstanding. But, the tunic appearance of his uniform soon gave way to the painted-on look that is still used by most super-heroes today.

The origin of CAPTAIN MARVEL is as mystical in real life as in the character's introduction in Whiz Comics. Of course, National claimed it was a direct steal from Superman. Another theory has it that the CAPTAIN MARVEL character evolved from a dream sequence in an old Fred MacMurry motion picture a lampoon of Superman that was muted and made workable. In short, a take-off that took off The third, and most likely, possibility was that the amazing CAPTAIN was a product emerging from the minds of talented men who were told to get busy and create a hero that would out-super Superman or they wouldn't get paid. And after a false start in Whiz #1, wherein a black-clad hero named Captain Thunder sported a lightning bolt on his chest, CAPTAIN MARVEL was introduced in Whiz #2. Since Whiz #1 was a highly limited production, Whiz #2 can be(and often is)considered the first official issue. Although a multitude of talent went into the thirteen year career of the colorful CAPTAIN,(including the omnipresent hand of Jack Kirby) the writing and drawing team of Otto O. Binder and C.C. Beck are generally credited with having the most influence on Fawcett's astoundingly popular publication. CAPTAIN MARVEL's origin introduction must be the most often printed data in comic-book history. After the successful CAPTAIN was featured in his own mag,an origin synopsis appeared on the first,inside page of every issue. Here again,is that very brief briefing. Shazam,an ancient wizard and arch enemy of evil,was nearing the end of his days. Before passing on,he bestowed his powers on a poor,orphaned newsboy, one Billy Batson by name. Before tapping out, old Shazam explains that his name is indicative of his powers. "S" for Solomon/wisdon, "H" for Hercules/strength,"A"for Atlas/stamina, "Z" for Zeus/power, "A" for Achilles/courage and "M" for Mercury/speed. By speaking Shazam's name aloud, Billy Batson became (or was replaced by) the powerful CAPTAIN MARVEL; the transition being effected and hidden by a flash of magic lightning.

The puzzle of whether a single personality inhabited both bodies,or if CAPTAIN MARVEL and Billy Batson were two different and seperate people was similar to the more recent Thor and Dr. Blake problem. But,unlike the Thor dilemma,MARVEL's status was never explained. True,Billy often spoke of calling on(not changing to) CAPTAIN MARVEL,but Clark Kent would say,"This looks like a job for Superman." even when no one else was around. So,there's no clue there. At the risk of offending a great many people,I'll take a chance on suggesting a similarity to a situation that actually existed. Jesus Christ spoke of God,and prayed to his Father in heaven when he himself was God,incarnate. Consider the other likenesses. The God-like attitude of old Shazam is undenyable. And Billy Batson was led by a mysterious "angel" to the secret grotto of Shazam to be informed of his destiny. Maybe that doesn't make him an exact copy of the Virgin Mary,but the result was a two-fisted savior that appealed to a comic-buying public like no other hero; and his "ghost" has permeated the very fiber of comic fandom. Holey Moley! If the idea of comparing CAPTAIN MARVEL to Jesus is blasphemous,then CAPTAIN MARVEL was blasphemous and deserved to be -- struck by lightning. Kick that around. Of course,it's argumentive if that particular facet of Christian faith played a part in CAPTAIN MARVEL's creation, conciously or otherwise. To compound the confusion,Billy's twin sister made the happy discovery that she also possessed the power, and so became MARY MARVEL. The MARVEL FAMILY had begun.

Meanwhile,back at the front,the legal battle was raging. The characters of Superman and CAPTAIN MARVEL were similar. Both had secret identities,both wore gaudy outfits over powerful frames,both were invulnerable to ordinary weapons,both had the power of flight, both had black hair,and both put on their body stockings,one leg at a time. But there were differences. Superman,in his guise of Clark Kent was still Superman. Billy Batson was just another kid who could be dispatched with a crack on the head if a villian suspected his secret.

Superman was from another planet. CAPTAIN MARVEL was a product of Earth,although magic played a heavy role. Superman was a more serious character,even to the point of coldness. CAPTAIN MARVEL was more a big brother type or at least the way you'd like a big brother to be. The plots,like the drawings were simplified. Perhaps,the secret of CAPTAIN MARVEL's success was that he played to a larger audience. By combining the appeal of a super-hero with the charm of nonsense-entertainment, CAPTAIN MARVEL cleverly or accidentally doubled his potential and sold on both sides of the street.

While the two heroes fought the sales battle on the newstands,and their lawyers tangled legally,a third battle raged on the streets,causing interesting side effects in the strips themselves. The question,"Could CAPTAIN MARVEL beat up Superman?" resulted in actual fights among younger fans. CAPTAIN MARVEL was in part,an amplified Superman. But, when the Big Red Cheese endeavored to become "the world's mightiest mortal",National seemed determined that their hero would be first in story-strength,if not in sales-strenth. If CAPTAIN MARVEL could lift a building, Superman would lift a mountain. CAPTAIN MARVEL flew first,and the high leaping Superman soon discovered,he could fly also. Faster than a speeding bullet became faster than the speed of light for both heroes. As of this writing,Superman is still plagued by a "too powerful" complex. Although the Big Red Cheese is gone from the legitimate comic-book scene,his ghost still haunts the pages of the most famous super-hero in history. Superman is the most well-known,comic-book character and one of the most identifyable,fiction heroes that ever But whisper,"Shazam" and the National empire trembles just a little.

When National took on Fawcett,all the smart money was betting on Fawcett,a giant in the publishing world. Fawcett's corporation lawyers had something to play with,and they would fight a holding action for over ten years without working up a sweat. National's hope was based on a former victory. They had successfully sued one competitor out of existence already. A Powerman character was judged a steal and stopped dead before he could become a serious threat. CAPTAIN MARVEL was another story,and before that story ended,the lawsuit began to affect the MARVEL character almost as much as the character affected the court proceedings. Interesting changes occured in the CAPTAIN MARVEL personality during those years of litergation. He became larger, and friendlier,like a college fullback who'd just as soon play touch football with the neighborhood kids as chase criminals. He even went without a cape for one issue. A back-up hero came into being;CAPTAIN AMRVEL,JR. made his appearence before Superboy. Later, Fawcett would claim Superboy was a rehash of their character. Billy Batson said,"Shazam" in front of anyone;his secret identity became negligible. CAPTAIN MARVEL dropped his romantic interest and avoided a further similarity to his plaintiff,Superman. The Big Red Cheese's girl friend was also a form of comedy relief. She was the daughter of Fawcett's most famous(or infamous)villian, Doctor Sivana. Beautia Sivana nearly drove her daddy nuts with her infatuation for the aloof CAPTAIN MARVEL. Of course,Billy Batson was crazy about her;he was an adolescent lad and she was a knock-out with big knockers. The situation made a little more sense than the Superman/Lois Lane/Clark Kent triangle, but Beautia never gained the fame of Miss Lane. Which was just as well;if she'd stayed longer, she'd have been remembered less fondly. With the passage of time,the differences between the two,battling super-heroes became more evident. The smart money doubled their bets on Fawcett;Superman was kicking a dead horse.

Comic-book sales were falling off as the medium entered the fifties and the age of television. Super-heroes were left on the stands for the more popular crime and horror books. CAPTAIN MARVEL had weathered the storm; most likely National would give up its"cease and desist"suit. But wonder of wonders, Fawcett threw in the towel. Failing sales,not pressure from National,convinced Fawcett to get out of the comic-book business. No jury brought in a verdict against the Big Red Cheese; they never deliberated. In 1953,Fawcett withdrew it's legal team. CAPTAIN MARVEL and the rest of the MARVEL FAMILY were never to appear in strip form again. By default,National had won a successful injunction. And the name, CAPTAIN MARVEL fell into disuse. Why maintain a copyright on an unusable name? Why,indeed? A few,interesting sidelights were spawned in those thirteen years of MARVEL's lifetime. Almost everyone over thirty remembers the Big Red Cheese. Not just comic fans; everyone. They're vague about the rest of the"Family"but they do remember him. Curiously,the best remembered alter-ego is CAPTAIN MARVEL JR.'s Freddy Freeman. Freddy was not a member of the Batson Family. He was an injured youth, rescued by CAPTAIN MARVEL after a battle with a super-villian caused the incident that almost killed the unfortunate youth. Billy Batson/CAPTAIN MARVEL could invoke the assistance of the departed Shazam by entering the hidden cavern and rekindling the departed wizard's magic flame. The spirit of old Shazam would appear and usually give advice and guidence. This time,the good CAPTAIN asked Shazam to save the dying Freddy Freeman. The result was a younger version of the Big Red Cheese in a uniform that sported blue where his predecessor's was red. It was a well done strip, better drawn than the senior's with a more,novel, alter-ego. For although Shazam prevented the injured boy from dying,he was lame for life. The result was that the cripple newsboy is often "disremembered"as CAPTAIN MARVEL's other self.

The"other self" problem became very confused in the twilight of CAPTAIN MARVEL's career. In a whimsical tale,the god in charge of throwing the magic lightning that transformed Billy into the World's Mightiest Mortal,developed a bad shoulder. He missed his mark,the lightning hit another kid,and BOOM! CAPTAIN MARVEL and Billy Batson came face-to-face. Holey Moley! Although that episode would seem to offer conclusive proof that CAPTAIN MARVEL and Billy Batson were indeed two,seperate people, the "feeling" of the story lacked any such conviction. An exponent of the "one personality/two forms"theory could easily claim that the chance encounter was not unlike a grown man traveling back in time to see himself as a boy.

No one could ever accuse MARVEL's editors of not giving his readers food for thought. Most of us are still chewing. Just plain,bad editing did occur in the fifties when the MARVEL FAMILY conducted an investigation that proved beyond doubt that the Atlantis legend was no more than a myth. But,one of the most memorable MARVEL FAMILY adventures of the forties was an Atlantis story,divided into three parts. Past,present and future;the present segment taking place under water. However,the contradiction was not nearly as alarming as it should have been because the MARVEL series concept had already been stretched into an almost ho-hum situation. The LIEUTENANT MARVELS added another strain to the reader's "suspension of disbelief". Billy Batson had three cousins,also named Billy. When they said "Shazam" with him they could become LIEUTENANT MARVELS. Other characters included a sham MARVEL, UNCLE MARVEL by name,who"adopted" the orphaned Batsons and Freddy. There were villian MARVELS and a very young fake,female MARVEL named FRECKLES MARVEL. Sometime during the parade of human MARVELS,the ultimate indignity occured. A funny animal hero, MARVEL BUNNY was featured in FAWCETT'S FUNNY ANIMALS and in his own mag. More than one good idea had died from oversuccess;perhaps it was time to retire the Big Red Cheese.

Almost ten years passed before the super-hero concept was"re-discovered"by comic fans and publishers. "Camp" gave the industry a boost, and editors like Stan Lee made the idea interesting again with a new attitude. Then, in 1965,M.F. Enterprises (a fast buck publisher) latched onto the unused name of CAPTAIN MARVEL. The result was a new super-hero; this time,clad in purple. The new model was a robot with the ability to detach a fist,arm leg or even his head;and send it flying across the room to score a hit,then recall the wayward member for instant re-attachment. It was a bad idea,badly drawn. The only reason for mentioning it at all is that the publisher must've grabbed the expired copyright on the name,CAPTAIN MARVEL. Because a third CAPTAIN MARVEL was in the making,and with it came a second lawsuit. The Marvel Comics Group had decided to couple the nostalgic name with an up-and-coming,super-hero of their own. The purple CAPTAIN MARVEL of M.F. Enterprises was already an obvious failure when Marvel Comics attempted to buy the copyright to the character's name. M.F.'s agent held out for an exorbitant amount,and Marvel's Madmen told him to take his demand and stick it in his ear;the word "MARVEL" was already part of their registered trade mark,and they'd proceed to name their new hero CAPTAIN MARVEL on the strength of that precedent. A minor attempt at a lawsuit was begun,then the matter was settled out of court with Marvel Comics buying the copyright for a nominal sum and M.F. Enterprises leaving the comic-book scene.

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The third CAPTAIN MARVEL has also gone to that great newsstand in the sky. His career,though brief is quite significant. He was an out-of-space origin. But,National's Superman had the out-of-space origin sewed up legally. It was one thing to rattle National's cage with the name,CAPTAIN MARVEL,but to steal Superman's thunder was pure madness. However,poor sales plagued the new CAPTAIN MARVEL from the beginning,and he never became a serious threat to the Man of Steel's popularity. Just what was wrong seems uncertain. Maybe the magazine started out as a rush job;it seemed (to this writer) that it just wasn't carefully done. Marvel Comics had already established a background for their CAPTAIN MARVEL. He was a "man of the Kree",that mysterious race from beyond the stars. The Kree had been mentioned in some well-written Marvel adventures, and had become a part of the undertone of super science-fiction that permeates most of the Marvel line of comics. But,the CAPTAIN MARVEL creation caused Marvel's writers to zoom in on the Kree situation,and the result was the destruction of an intriguing mystique. We should never have gotten a close look at a Kree. They could've remained "hidden" in their spacesuits; and CAPTAIN MARVEL might have affected a humanoid disguise to walk among us Earthmen. But,that's water over the dam,and muddy water at that. As I've said,I don't know exactly what was wrong with the magazine itself. However,Tom Crawford (a fan writer) really did some fine research,then let fandom and Marvel in on the critical results via an article in FANTASTIC FANZINE #6*7 and a letter,printed in CAPTAIN MARVEL #15. The problem was fair writing,plagued by a gross lack of scientific knowledge. Still,Marvel seemed determined to make their new character succeed.CAPTAIN MARVEL was revamped,with a complete overhaul in appearance and powers,in issue #16. New writer,new artist,and new costume. (Aurora Plastics would go nuts,trying to produce a CAPTAIN MARVEL Model.)

In issue #17 he picked up an "alter-ego",teenager Rick Jones;and became highly reminiscent of the Big Red Cheese. CAPTAIN MARVEL,trapped in a limbo-like "Negative Zone" could be be called into action by young Rick for a limited time,provided Rick Jones took his place during the prescribed period. That sounds confusing, but at least no known laws of science were violated. And sales increased enough for Marvel to consider continuing the magazine. They're still considering it for all I know. The problem is that super-hero stock is down at the present,and publishers are searching for a new direction. The Man of The Kree is up the creek as well as being stuck in the Negative Zone. I wish,the out-of-space CAPTAIN MARVEL had been a smashing success. If National holds a sword over other publishers, concerning the out-of-space origin; Marvel holds a club over National in the under water department.

The Sub-Mariner could tell Aquaman to get out of his ocean;Subby was there first. The last CAPTAIN MARVEL may have made his final appearence in issue #21 of Marvel's CAPTAIN MARVEL. But,The Big Red Cheese will live forever. His lost,legal battle with Superman has endeared him to fandom like no other hero. It's easy to associate the lightly done CAPTAIN with the running gag,"So-and-so is alive and well in Mexico City." Because I can't help believing that CAPTAIN MARVEL is alive and- well, alive anyway.

-Bill Cantey-

AN EPILOGUE-CATALOGUE ON CAPTAIN MARVEL

The following is a list of reference material for anyone interested in delving more deeply into CAPTAIN MARVEL material. Good hunting. Additions to this fan checklist are encouraged and welcome; as well as any comments and criticisms,including agreeable disagreements. Thanks, B.C.

PARAGON ILLUSTRATED, Issues #1 & 2
$1.00 each from:

PARAGON ILLUSTRATED
2125 Jackson Bluff Rd.
Tallahassee,Fla. 32304

I mention this publication first,because it's within reach of most fans and its editor is professional artist,Bill Black. Bill is a devotee of the Big Red Cheese,and wanted to revive the original CAPTAIN MARVEL in strip form just for fun. He was stymied by the old, National injunction;but he produced the finest, illustrated article on the CAPTAIN MARVEL era that this fan has ever seen.

ALL IN COLOR FOR A DIME, by Lupoff & Thompson
$13.00 from:

Edwin M. Aprill,Jr.
5272 W. Liberty Rd.
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103

This highly worthwhile hardback has an entire chapter devoted to the Big Red Cheese. In fact,the book itself is dedicated to Otto O. Binder. The best book on comics since "The Great Comic Book Heroes".

THE ROCKET'S BLAST SPECIAL #8,for $1.00
THE FANDOM ANNUAL No. 1, for $2.25
from:

The S.F.C.A.
9875 S.W. 212 St.
Miami,Fla. 33157

And while you're at it,order the current issue of "The Rocket's Blast Comicollector" for 75¢; it's loaded with ads for old comics. But, old comics featuring the Big Red Cheese do come high. Anywhere from $2.00 to $200.00. Other comics to check are the three Fatman Comics, written and drawn by O.O. Binder and C.C. Beck. They're a good example of the eye-pleasing art design that was one of CAPTAIN MARVEL's main assets.

MIKE
ROBERTS
71

The "Special",#8 is a fanzine devoted to CAPTAIN MARVEL alone. The "Annual,#1" has more related information on the Big Red Cheese's adventures. The "Special" reprinted CAPTAIN MARVEL's origin in strip form by semi-pro, Don Newton. And contains some fine,single illos by the same artist as well as a beautiful, center-fold illustration by Bob Kline. Of added interest is a one-page article on the M. F. Enterprises and Marvel Comics Group legal contest over the CAPTAIN MARVEL name. It's in The Rocket's Blast #56; a dollar from the same address.

SCREEN THRILLS ILLUSTRATED #'s 1 & 2 contain information on the CAPTAIN MARVEL movie serial. They're no longer available from Warren Publications,but some dealers may still have them. If you pay over $2.00; you've been had.

SAGA MAGAZINE, Oct.,1966 (Original price 50¢; now priceless)
This popular,man's magazine printed an article by professional writer,Sam Henderson, on the legal encounter between CAPTAIN MARVEL and Superman. Extremely well written and entertaining. Any fanzine editor would be fortunate to get permission to reprint this article that likely caught most of fandom napping.
Write to: Gambi Publications,Inc.
Executive and Editorial Offices
30-30 Northern Blvd.
Long Island City, N.Y. 11101

THE GREAT COMIC BOOK HEROES, by Jules Feiffer
$9.95 from:
The Dial Press,Inc.
750 Third Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10017

Likely out of print. Though probably still available from dealers. Check "The Rocket's Blast", you may find a bargain;then again, you might get skinned. Jules Feiffer presented the CAPTAIN MARVEL origin in strip form with special permission from National Periodicals in 1965. After over ten years,the Big Red Cheese still made Superman nervous. Amazing.

MONSTERS AND HEROES #4, by Larry Ivie
Box 505
Asonia, N.Y.C.10023

Probably sold out and not available from the original publisher. I missed this item myself. But,the 'zine is highly regarded; if you spy it, buy it.

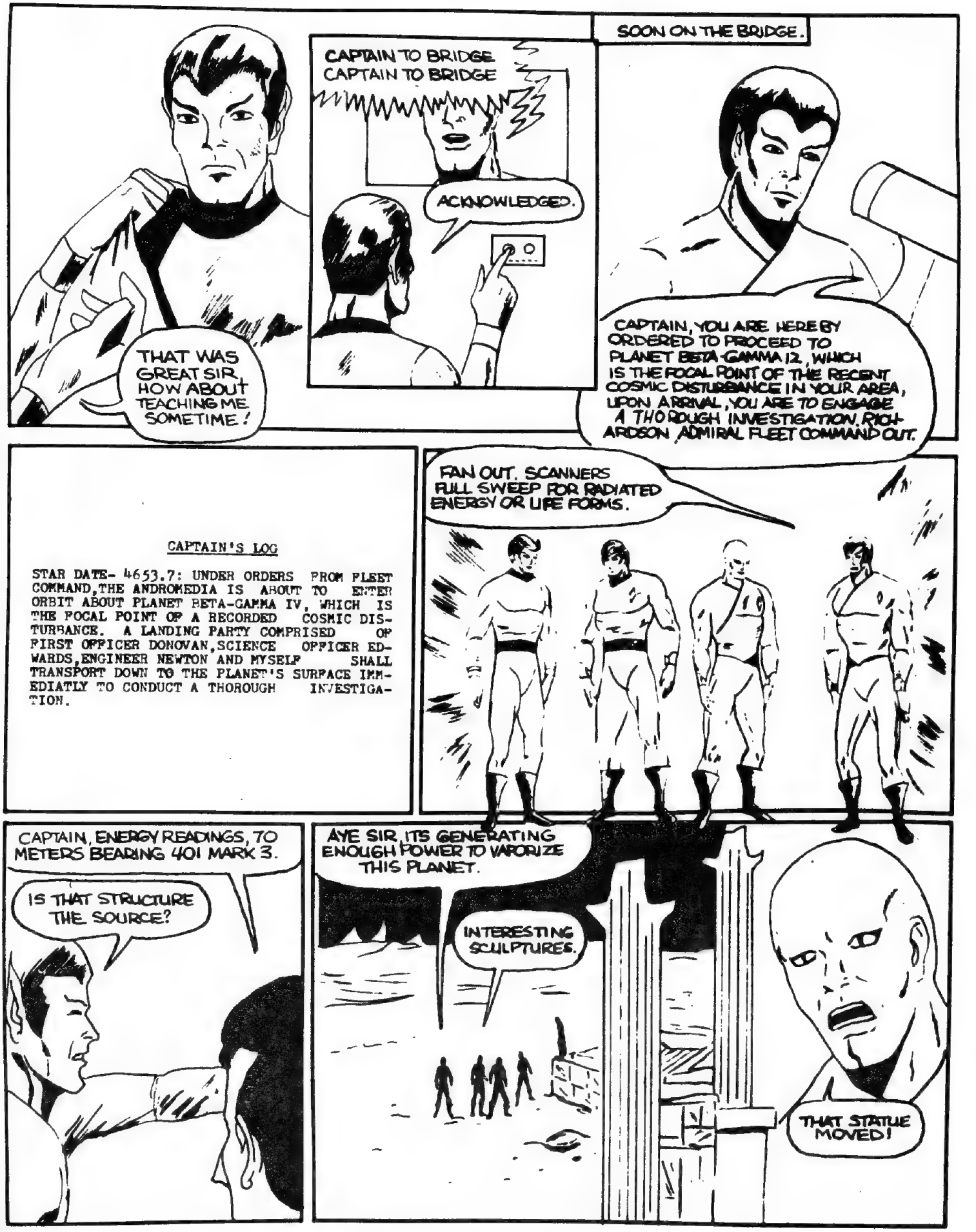
ALTER-EGO #7
Now out of print,and currently a pro-zine.Very good article on the entire MARVEL saga; worth searching for.

And keep an eye on SUPERGRAPHICS. Steranko hasn't expounded on the Big Red Cheese yet;but when he does,it should be well worth reading.

CAPT.
MARVEL
BY

TETZLOFF

THE ANDROMEDIA SAGA


THAT WAS GREAT SIR, HOW ABOUT TEACHING ME SOMETIME!
CAPTAIN TO BRIDGE CAPTAIN TO BRIDGE
ACKNOWLEDGED.
SOON ON THE BRIDGE.
CAPTAIN, YOU ARE HEREBY ORDERED TO PROCEED TO PLANET BETA-GAMMA 12, WHICH IS THE FOCAL POINT OF THE RECENT COSMIC DISTURBANCE IN YOUR AREA, UPON ARRIVAL, YOU ARE TO ENGAGE A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION. RICHARDSON, ADMIRAL FLEET COMMAND OUT.
CAPTAIN'S LOG
STAR DATE- 4653.7: UNDER ORDERS FROM FLEET COMMAND, THE ANDROMEDIA IS ABOUT TO ENTER ORBIT ABOUT PLANET BETA-GAMMA IV, WHICH IS THE FOCAL POINT OF A RECORDED COSMIC DISTURBANCE. A LANDING PARTY COMPRISED OF FIRST OFFICER DONOVAN, SCIENCE OFFICER EDWARDS, ENGINEER NEWTON AND MYSELF SHALL TRANSPORT DOWN TO THE PLANET'S SURFACE IMMEDIATLY TO CONDUCT A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION.
FAN OUT. SCANNERS FULL SWEEP FOR RADIATED ENERGY OR LIFE FORMS.
CAPTAIN, ENERGY READINGS, 70 METERS BEARING 401 MARK 3.
IS THAT STRUCTURE THE SOURCE?
AYE SIR, ITS GENERATING ENOUGH POWER TO VAPORIZE THIS PLANET.
INTERESTING SCULPTURES.
THAT STATUE MOVED!

HOLD I AM OMEGA, LORD OF THIS LONG FORGOTTEN WORLD, A PLANET IS IN NEED OF PEOPLE, YOU AND YOUR CREW SHALL REMAIN HERE AND POPULATE THIS PLANET.
CAPTAIN! A COSMIC STORM OF HIGH INTENSITY HAS JUST HIT, IT CAME OF NOWHERE, IF WE LOWER THE SHIELDS, WE'LL BE BLASTED TO NOTHING, AND THE ORBIT IS LOCKED!
HAVE YOU TRIED FULL POWER PLUS EMERGENCY ATOMIC DRIVE?
AYE SIR, BUT NO GOOD.
GET OUT OF THERE, AS FAST AS YOU CAN, I DON'T CARE IF YOU JETTISON THE PODS, BUT GET THAT SHIP OUT OF THERE, MR. NEWTON ASSIST!
CAPTAIN, COMMUNICATIONS LOST, IT LOOKS LIKE THE COMMUNICATORS AREN'T WORKING
I AM THE CAUSE OF THE SHIPS DILEMMA CAPTAIN, AND THE INTENSITY OF THE COSMIC BOMBARDMENT WILL INCREASE TO THE POINT OF COLLAPSE AND YOUR SHIP IS VAPORIZED UNLESS YOU ORDER YOUR CREW DOWN HERE.
NEWTON, CAN HE DO IT?
IT APPEARS SO.
ALLRIGHT MISTER, WHATEVER YOU'VE DONE, YOU'D BETTER TURN IT OFF, OR ELSE YOU'LL GET A SAMPLE OF OUR POWER.
YOU NEED ONLY TO GIVE THE ORDER CAPTAIN.
ALLRIGHT, WHOEVER YOU ARE YOU ASKED FOR IT.
VERY WELL MORTAL, IT IS NOW MY TURN.

THE TORCH IN HIS OWN MAG?

BY BILL CANTEY

After a ten year abstinence from comic magazines;the first,new-age Marvel that I bought was Fantastic Four #59. And the first question that occured to me was,"Why was the Human Torch so young?" The other characters were new to me. Reed Richard's ability to stretch and change form was reminiscent of the old Plastic Man, but good swiping is part of good comic editing. So there was no complaint there. Still,the Torch was a well remembered favorite from over twenty years ago. Some comic characters never get older , but this is the first time I'd seen one get younger. However,once hooked,I went all the way. Reprints,back-issues and fanzines soon clarified the situation. This was a new Torch;part of an intriguing,new beginning.

At the time,I thought Marvel would've preferred not to be reminded of the first Torch. But,no. In Fantasy Masterpieces Magazine #8-#11,Marvel eagerly related the adventures of the original Torch;including a reprint of that Torch's origin in issue #9. Then, to my delighted suprise,Marvel combined the two Torches in a single adventure,presented in Fantastic Four Special #4. Great.

Later,when Marvel gave Captain America and the Sub-Mariner their own magazines; I wondered about the third member of the "Golden Age" big three. Could Marvel give the Human Torch his own magazine without wrecking the Fantastic Four team? After careful consideration, I thought of one way it might be done.

Johnny Storm's college life,enhanced by the characters,Wyatt Wingfoot and Crystal would make a good background for solo adventures. Since Johnny's Torch identity is no secret his social problems would be different from Peter Parker's,but no less hectic. Still, the singular situation might become tiresome after a few issues. A completely,new magazine would need something more.

So--<u>bring back the original Torch</u>! But then, the original Human Torch had a minor flaw, he wasn't human. He was a flaming android, created by a Professor Horton. Later, the reader is required to politely forget this fact and the Torch becomes "humanized". Suppose though, he was human all along? Suppose he was Horton's son,who was almost burned to death? After the accident,Horton placed his dying son in suspended animation and worked frantically to create a synthetic skin that would be impervious to fire. He succeeded in preserving life,but the burning along with freezing suspension of life,followed by the shock of rebirth,destroyed the Torch's memory Not wanting his son to be remembered as a freak;Horton proclaimed him a robot, placed him in a steel capsule(again suspended),until he could work out a solution. Then of course the Torch escaped,learned to control his flame,and became one of Marvel's greatest super heroes.

Later,he disappeared and was not seen again until he was brought back by the Mad Thinker and turned against the Fantastic Four. Where had he been all that time? Again suppose. He'd married,and in the passionate excitement of his wedding night,he flamed on and killed his wife! Or--if that's too rough--a gang land killer threw a bomb into their bedroom and wifey is killed in the explosion. Either way,the result is the same;he didn't want to be the Torch anymore. So,Horton suspended him again and searched for a way to make his son normal. But Horton died,and later the Mad Thinker discovered and revived the Torch. Then,when the Torch defied him,the Thinker attempted to destroy him forever. But if Reed Richards saved him,the forgetful Torch could live again. With two Torches, Marvel could start a Human Torch Magazine,having a direct cross reference to the Fantastic Four

And what of Toro,the original Torch's partner? Toro's origin was reviewed in Fantasy Masterpieces #11. His flaming ability could be described as "mutant power",making him the only natural born Torch. His visitation to the new-age Marvels came in Sub-Mariner #14. The Thinker used Toro in one of his evil schemes. The end result was again disaster and apparent death for a flaming hero. Although Namor concluded that Toro perished in a fiery explosion at the story's conclusion; death by fire or heat seems an unlikely death for a living flame. I'd have him survive after all.(A Marvel specialty), Then join the original Torch and Johnny Storm to form a chanegable Torch Magazine.

The original Torch and Toro could either fill in for Johnny on the Fantastic Four team, or star/co-star in the Human Torch Magazine. Having the original Torch remember gradually everything(with plenty of flash-backs), along with Toro explaining where he's been for the past ten years(I think he was hen-pecked into quiting),could make interesting first issues. But most important,all three of Marvel's Golden Age Heroes(Subby,Cap & Torch) would be featured in their own mags. And that's how it might be done.

-Bill Cantey-

MIKE
ROBERTS
71

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